The Last Shot

FREDERICK PALMER

BYNOPSIS.

At their home on the frontier between the Browns and Grays Marta Galland and her midther, entertaining Colonel Westerling of the Grays, see Captain Lanstron, staff, intelligence officer of the Browns, injured by a fall in his aeroplane. Ten years later. Westerling, nominal vice but real chief of staff, reinforces South La Tir, meditates on war, and speculates on the comparative ages of himself and Marta, who is visiting in the Gray capital. Wesferling calls on Marta. She tells him of her teaching children the follies of war and martial patriotism, begs him to prevent war, while he is chief of staff, and predicts that if he makes war against the Browns he will not win. On the march with the 52d of the Browns Private Stransky, anarchist, decries war and playedout patriotism and is placed under arrest. Colonel Lanstron calls on Marta at her home. He talks with Feller, the gardner. Marta tells Lanstron that she believes Feller to be a spy. Lanstron confesses it is true.

CHAPTER VI-Continued.

"Oh, it's you, Lanny-Colonel Lanstron!" he exclaimed thickly. "I saw that some one had come in here and naturally I was alarmed, as nobody but myself ever enters. And Miss Galland!" He removed his hat deferentialthe lines of his face drooped. "I was so stupid; it did not occur to me that you might be showing the tower to Colonel Lanstron."

"We are sorry to have given you a fright?" said Marta very gently.

"Eh? Eh!" quaried Feller, again jected; "not to me, Marta." deaf. "Fright? Oh, no, no fright. It might have been some boys from the five to one or ten to one in human town marauding."

He was about to withdraw, in keeping with his circumspect adherence free of the will-o'-the-wisp glamour that to his part, which he played with a draws on soldiers." sincerity that half-convinced even himself at times that he was really deaf, when the fire fickered back suddenly

"Wait, Feller! Three of us share the secret now. These are Miss Galland's premises. I thought best that she should know everything," said Lan-

"Everything!" exclaimed Feller. Everything-" the word caught in his throat. "You mean my story, too?" He knows who I am?" he asked.

"His story!" exclaimed Marta, with tions. You are our very efficient gardener. That is all we need to know. isn't that the way you wish it, Mr. Feller?

"Yes, just that!" he said softly, raising his eyes to her. "Thank you, Miss Galland!"

He was going after another "Thank you!" and a bow; going with the slow step and stoop of his part, when Lanstron; with a masculine roughness of impulse which may be sublime gentleness, swung him around and seized his hands in a firm caress.

"Forgive me, Gustave!" he begged. "Forgive the most brutal of all injuries-that which wounds a friend's plied: sensibilities.'

Why, there is nothing I could ever returning Lanstron's pressure while for an instant his quickening muscles gave him a soldierly erectness. Then his attitude changed to one of doubt and inquiry. "And you found out that that boast of the ballot and self-gov-I was not deaf when you had that fall on the terrace?" he asked, turning to Marta. "That is how you happened to get the whole story? Tell me, honestly!" "Yes."

the others, Miss Galland," he said with | be to my taste." a charming bow, "and you are so quick corry to have deceived you."

to me," said Marta, finding consolation | satire. in pleasing him.

"Eh? Eh?" He put his hand to his yes," he added, as a deaf man will when understanding of a remark which ous terms. he failed at first to catch comes to him in an echo. "Yes, the gardener has no of next year's blossoms of the future

be stiffing him, that of the roofiess world of the garden calling him. The saw the plan as chimerical, yet it was bent figure disappeared around a turn a chance—the one out of a thousand. to the path and they listened without It it should happen to succeed we moving until the sound of his slow, should play with our cards concealed dragging footfalls had died away.

"When he is serving those of his proud and intense-" and a look of bayonet charge!

where a friend's pleas might have sation, and, as a trained officer, know falled. This was as it should be, Lan- the value of what he heard and report ing before," she said, with a gesture of stron thought.

"The right view-the view that you quarters." were bound to take!" he said.

(Copyright, 1914, by Charles Scribner's Sons) "And yet, I don't know your plans

> truders here. "A man playing deaf; a secret telephone installed on our premises without our consent-this is all I know so far," said Marta, seated opposite Lanstron at one end of the circular

for him, Lanny. There is another thing

to consider," she replied, with an ab-

rupt change of tone. "But first let us

leave Feller's quarters. We are in-

seat in the arbor of Mercury. "Of course, with our 3,000,000 against their 5,000,000, the Grays will take the offensive," he said. "For us, the defensive. La Tir is in an angle. It does not belong in the permanent tactical line of our defenses. Nevertheless, there will be hard fighting here. The Browns will fall back step by step, and we mean, with relatively small cost to ourselves, to make the Grays pay a heavy price for each step just as heavy as we can."

"You need not use euphonious terms," she said without lifting her lashes or any movement except a quick, nervous gesture of her free ly and bowed; his stoop returned and hand. "What you mean is that you will kill as many as possible of the Grays, len't is? And if you could kill five for every man you lost, that would be splendid, wouldn't it?"

"I don't think of it as splendid. There is nothing splendid about war," he ob-

"And after you have made them pay lives for the tangent, what then? Go on! I want to look at war face to face,

We fall back to our first line of dedense, fighting all the time. The Grays occupy La Tir, which will be out of the to his eyes and he glanced from Lan- reach of our guns. Your house will stron to the stairway in desperate in- no longer be in danger, and we happen to know that Westerling means to make it his headquarters."

"Our house Westerling's headquarters!" she repeated. With a start that brought her up erect, alert, challenging, her lashes flickering, she recalled that Westerling had said at parting that he should see her if war came. This corroborated Laustron's informawas neither young nor old now. "She tion. One side wanted a spy in the garden; the other a general in the house. Was she expected to make a a puzzled look to Lanstron before she choice? He had ceased to be Lanny. turned to Feller with a look of warm He personified war. Westerling persympathy. "Why, there is no story! sonified war. "I suppose you have You came with excellent recommenda- spies under his very nose—in his very staff offices?" she asked.

"And probably he has in ours," said Lanstron, "though we do our best to prevent it."

"What a pretty example of trust among civilized nations!" she exclaimed. "You say that Westerling, who commands the killing on his side, will be in no danger. And, Lanny, are you a person of such distinction in the business of killing that you also will be out of danger?"

She did not see, as her eyes poured her hot indignation into his, that his maimed hand was twitching or how he bit his lips and flushed before he re-

"Each one goes where he is sent, link by link, down from the chief of have to forgive you, Lanny," he said, staff. Only in this way can you have that solidarity, that harmonious efficiency which means victory."

"An autocracy, a tyranny over the lives of all the adult males in countries erning institutions!" she put in.

"But I hope," he went on, with the quickening pulse and eager smile that used to greet a call from Feller to "set things going" in their cadet days, "that I may take out a squadron of dirigibles. "You saw so much more of me than After all this spy business, that would

"And if you caught a regiment in to observe. I am sorry"-he paused close formation with a shower of the orderly saluted and departed at a with head down for an instant-"very bombs, that would be positively heav-"But you are still a deaf gardener to him, her eyes flaming demand and

"No! War-necessary, horrible, hellish!" he replied. Something in her ear as he resumed his stoop. "Yes, seemed to draw out the brutal truth fore he tossed the charred remains she had asked for in place of euphoni-

"When I became chief of intelligence ers die every year and he thinks only our general staff headquarters in time of war. The purpose was the same as now, but abandoned as chimerical. All soon-within a week or two weeks-Now the air of the room seemed to that was necessary was to install the what would be your attitude about Felinstrument, which Feller did. I, too, ler's remaining?" and theirs on the table.

"The rest of Feller's part you have own social station I can see how it guessed already," he concluded. "You would be easier for him not to have can see how a deaf, inoffensive old me know," said Marta. "Sensitive, gardener would hardly seem to know go!" he declared urgently. a Gray soldier from a Brown; how it horror appeared in her eyes. "As he might no more occur to Westerling to came across the room his face was send him away than the family dog or have never deserted the Galland He had been called an ambitious demtransformed. I imagine it was like cat; how he might retain his quarters | house! that of a man giving no quarter in a in the tower; how he could judge the atmosphere of the staff, whether elated time the house will be in the thick of for his ready strategy, his gents for Feller had won the day for himself or depressed, pick up scraps of converit over the phone to Partow's nead- impatience.

"But what about the aeroplanes?" | main?" he urged.

she asked. "I thought you were to deend on them for scouting."

"We shall use them, but they are the least tried of all the new resources," he said. "A Gray aeroplane lawn, inviting the shells of the enemy may cut a Brown aeroplane down before it returns with the news we want. At most, when the aviator may descend low enough for accurate observation he can see only what is actually being done. Feller would know Westerling's plans before they were even in the first steps of execution. This"-playing the thought happily-"this would be the ideal arrangement, while our planes and dirigibles were kept over our lines to strike down theirs. And, Marta, that is all," he concluded.

"If there is war, the moment that Feller's ruse is discovered he will be shot as a spy?" she asked.

"I warned him of that,' said Lanstron. "He is a soldier, with a soldier's fatalism. He sees no more dander in this than in commanding a battery in a crisis."

'Suppose that the Grays win? Suppose that La Tir is permanently theirs?"

"They shall not win! They must not!" Lanstron exclaimed, his tone as rigid as Westerling's toward her second prophecy.

"Yet if they should win and Westerling finds that I have been party to this treachery, as I shall be now that am in the secret, think of the position of my mother and myself!" she continued. "Has that occurred to you. a friend in making our property, our garden, our neutrality, which is our only defense, a factor in one of your plans without our permission?"

Her eyes, blue-black in appeal and reproach, revealed the depths of a wound as they had on the terrace steps before luncheon, when he had been apprised of a feeling for him by seeing it dead under his blow. The logic of the chief of intelligence withered. He understood how a friendship to her was, indeed, more sacred than patriotic passion. He realized the shame of what he had done now that he was free of professional influences.

"You are right, Marta!" he replied. 'It was beastly of me-there is no ex-

He looked around to see an orderly from the nearest military wireless station.

"I was told it was urgent, sir," said the orderly, in excuse for his intrusion, as he passed a telegram to Lanstron. Immediately Lanstron felt the touch

of the paper his features seemed to take on a mask that concealed his thought as he read: "Take night express. Come direct

from station to me. Partow." This meant that he would be ex-



They Shall Not Win! They Must Not!"

rapid pace; and then, as a matter of enly, wouldn't it?" She bent nearer habit of the same kind that makes some men wipe their pens when laying them down, he struck a match and set fire to one corner of the paper, which burned to his fingers' ends beaway. Marta imagined what he would be like with the havoc of war raging around him-all self-possession and I found that an underground wire had mastery; but actually he was trying to past," he declared in the gentle old been laid to the castle from the Eighth | reassure himself that he ought not to gardener's voice, "when all the flow- division headquarters, which will be feel petulant over a holiday cut short. "I shall have to go at once," he said.

"Marta, if there were to be war very

"To carry out his plan, you mean?" "Yes." There was a perceptible pause on her part.

"Let him stay," she answered. war begins. "But instantly war begins you must

"You forget a precedent," she re-

the fighting." "It has been in the thick of the fight-

"I know the precedent. But this

"Marta, you will promise not to re-

"Isn't that my affair?" she asked. 'Aren't you willing to leave even that to me after all you have been telling to that region," Westerling replied, how you are to make a redoubt of our

into our drawing-room?" What could be say? Only call up from the depths the two passions of his life in an outburst, with all the force of his nature in play.

"I love this soil, my country's soil, be true to both!"

"Love! What mockery to mention that now!" she cried chokingly. "It's monstrous!" "I-I-" He was naking an effort

o keep his nerves under control. This time the stiffening elbow failed. With a lurching abruptness he swung his right hand around and seized the wrist of that trembling, injured hand that would not be still. She could not fail to noice the movement, and the sight was a magic that struck anger out of her.

"Lanny, I am hurting you!" she cried miserably

"A little," he said, will finally dominant over its servant, and he was smiling as when, half stunned and in agony-and ashamed of the fact-he had risen from the debris of cloth and twisted braces. "It's all right," he concluded.

She threw back her arms, her head raised, with a certain abandon as if she would bare her heart.

"Lanny, there have been moments then I would have liked to fly to your arms. There have been moments when I have had the call that comes to every woman in answer to a desire. Yet I was not ready. When I really go it must be in a flame, in answer to your flame!'

"You meah-I-" But if the flame were about to burst

forth she smothered it in the spark. "And all this has upset me," she went on incoherently. "We've both been cruel without meaning to be, and we're in the shadow of a nightmare; and next time you come perhaps all the war talk will be over and-oh, this is enough for today!"

She turned quickly in veritable flight

and hurried toward the house. "If it ever comes," she called, "I'll let you know! I'll fly to you in a charlot of fire bearing my flame-I am that bold, that brazen, that reckless! For I am not an old maid, yet. They've moved the age limit up to thirty. But you can't drill love into me as you drill discipline into armies-no, no more than I can argue peace into

For a while, motionless, Lanstron watched the point where she had disappeared.

CHAPTER VII.

Making a War.

Hedworth Westerling would have said twenty to one if he had been asked the odds against war when he was parting from Marta Galland in the reception room. Before he about the Bodlapoo affair compelling attention as his car halted to let the traffic of a cross street pass, he bought a newspaper thrust in at the car window that contained the answer of the government of the Browns to a dispatch of the Grays about the dispute that had arisen in the distant African jungle. This he had already read two days previously, by courtesy of the premier. It was moderate in tone, as became a power that had 3,000,000 soldiers against its opponent's 5,000,000; nevertheless, it firmly pointed out that the territory of the Browns had been overtly invaded, on the pretext of securing a deserter who had escaped across the line, by Gray colonial troops who had raised the Gray flag in place of the Brown flag and remained defiantly in occupation of the outpost

they had taken. As yet, the Browns had not attempted to repel the aggressor by arms for fear of complications, but were relying on the Gray government to order a withdrawal of the Gray force and the repudiation of a commander who had been guilty of so grave an international affront. The surprising and illuminating thing to Westerling was the inspired statement to the press from the Gray foreign office, adroitly appealing to Gray chauvinism and justifying the "intrepidity" of the Gray commander in response to so-called "pin-pricking" exasperations.

At the door of his apartment, Fran cols, his valet and factotum, gave Wes terling a letter.

"Important, sir," said Francois. Westerling knew by a glance that it was, for it was addressed and marked "Personal" in the premier's own handwriting. A conference for ten that evening was requested in a manner that left no doubt of its urgency.

Curiosity made him a little ahead of time, but he found the premier awaiting him in his study, free from interruption or eavesdropping.

In the shadow of the table lamp the old premier looked his years. From youth he had been in politics, ever a bold figure and a daring player, but now beginning to feel the pressure of shall have time to decide even after younger men's albows. Fonder even of power, which had become a habit, than in his twenties, he saw it slipping from his grasp at an age when the downfall of his government meant that | bites you, save the dog. minded him. "The Galland women he should never hold the reins again. agogue and a makeshift opportunist by his enemies, but the crowd liked him appealing phrases, and for the gambler's virtue which hitherto had made him a good loser.

You saw our communique tonight that went with the publication of the talking to she hastily added, "But you Browns' dispatch?" he remarked,

"Yes, and I am glad that I had been careful to send a spirited commander

"So you guess my intention, I see." The premier smiled. He picked up a long, thin ivory paper-knife and softly patted the palm of his hand with it.

"Certainly!" Westerling replied in his ready, confident manner.

"We hear a great deal about the precision and power of modern arms as ours by right-and I love you! I would favoring the defensive," said the premler. "I have read somewhere that it will enable the Browns to hold us back, despite our advantage of numbers. Also, that they can completely man every part of their frontier and that their ability to move their reserves rapidly, thanks to modern facilities, makes a powerful flanking attack in surprise out of the question."

> "Some half-truths in that," an-Westerling. "One axiom, that must hold good through all time, is that the aggressive which keeps at it always wins. We take the aggressive. In the space where Napoleon deployed a division, we deploy a battalion today. The precision and power of modern arms require this. With such immense forces and present-day tactics, the line of battle will practically cover the length of the frontier. Along their range the Browns have a series of fortresses commanding natural openings for our attack. These are almost impregnable. But there are pregnable points between them. Here, our method will be the same that the Japanese followed and that they learned from European armies. We shall concentrate in masses and throw in wave after wave of attack until we have gained the positions we desire. Once we have a tenable foothold on the crest of the range the Brown army must fall back and the rest will be a matter of skillful pursuit."

The premier, as he listened, rolled the paper knife over and over, regarding its polished sides, which were like Westerling's manner of facile statement of a program certain of fulfill-

"How long will it take to mobilize?" "Less than a week after the railroads are put entirely at our service, with three preceding days of scattered movements," answered Westerling. Deliberate mobilizations are all right for a diplomatic threat that creates a furore in the newspapers and a depression in the stock market, but which is not to be carried out. When you mean war, all speed and the war fever at white heat."

"You would have made a good politician. Westerling," the premier remarked, with a twitching uplift of the brows and a knowing gleam in his shrewd old eyes.

"Thank you," replied Westerling, "a man who is able to lead in anything must be something of a politician."

"Very true, indeed. Perhaps I had that partly in mind in making you vice-chief of staff," responded the premier.

"Then it all goes back to the public -to that enormous body of humanreached home he would have changed ity out there!" He swung the paper them to ten to one. A scare bulletin knife around with outstretched arm toward the walls of the room. "To public opinion—as does everything else in this age-to the people-our masters, your and mine! For no man can stand against them when they say no or yes.'

> "You know the keys to play on, though," remarked Westerling with a complimentary smile. "No one knows quite so well."

> "And you are sure-sure we can win?" the premier asked with a long, tense look at Westerling, who was steady under the scrutiny.

> "Absolutely!" he answered. "Five millions against three! It's mathematics, or our courage and skill are not equal to theirs. Absolutely! We have the power, why not use it? We do not live in a dream age!"

> From a sudden, unwitting exertion of his strength the knife which had been the recipient of his emotions snapped in two. Rather carefully the premier laid the pieces on the table before he rose and turned to Westerling, his decision made.

"If the people respond with the war fever, then it is war," he said. "I take you at your word that you will

"A condition!" Westerling announced. "From the moment war begins the army is master of all intelligence, all communication, all resources. Everything we require goes into the crucible!' (TO BE CONTINUED)

Save the Dog.

The Oregon state board of health bulletin says wisely with reference to mad dogs, "never kill the animal that bit you, save it with the greatest care," for the condition that dog develops is of the greatest consequence to the person bitten. If the dog is killed, the negri bodies, which are of importance in the diagnosis, may not be developed and no one will ever know whether the dog was or was not rabid. But if the dog is saved he will himself within a week or ten days show whether or not be is rabid. If he proves himself clear of rabies the man bitten need give the matter no further consideration from that side, and if it prove that he be rabid, there is still plenty of time for the man to take the proper remedies. If a dog

Qualified Rebuke.

Five-year-old Marie likes to see the funny pictures. She had the paper spread out on the floor looking at it when her father turned out the light. Mary was angry at this, and said, You've got your nerve," but as she realized immediately whom she was know your rights."

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

We wish you "many happy returns"-but happiness is really only a reflection of health. It depends largely on the digestion. If you are poorly as a result of a weak stomach, inactive liver or clogged bowels we urge a trial of

HOSTETTER'S STOMACH BITTERS

It brings back appetite, aids digestion and is beneficial to the entire system. Start today.

LOSSES SURELY PREVENTED

PROBABLY COULD DO WORK

Soldier's Occupation in Civil Life Certainly Should Have Fitted Him for the Job.

Real war conditions sometimes give rude shocks to the professional soldier trained to arms in the well-ordered days of peace. Here is a case in point. A Prussian Landwehr company was being mustered into service and there were many things to be done. Uniforms, equipment, riflles, were to be distributed, rolls prepared, reports made out, and quartermaster's lists checked up. The captain had his hands full. He ordered his first sergeant to find a noncom, who could write neatly and figure a little. The first sergeant was equal to the emergency. Corporal Kammermeyer was promptly summoned the crisply detailed for duty as company clerk. The corporal reported to the captain, who looked him over with a mixture of wonder and distrust.

"So you can figure, corporal," he said.

"A little, sir, at your service." The captain still looked dublous. "What is your trade in civil life. anyway?" he said.

"I am professor of mathematics, captain," was the reply.

Walking Graveyards.

Some of the Indian princes have given over two million dollars apiece to Britain for the war. Beside such gifts, the gifts of London business millionaires seem small.

"In fact," said James Douglas, in an interview, "in fact, the gifts of the nizam of Hyderabad and the maharajah of Mysore and the gaekwar of Baoda give our English merchant princes, who owe England so much more, a look of avarice; and you know the definition of avarlce.

"Avarice, like a graveyard, takes in all it can get, and never gives anything back."

War Styles.

"Have you heard anything about the fall fashions as yet?" "Not as to how the gowns will be

made. I suppose the girls are bound to wear cartridge belts, of course." The Drummer's Work. "Are these moving pictures of the

"Of course. All but the rumble of

artillery. That's imitated by the drummer." Smile, smile, beautiful clear white othes. Red Cross Ball Blue, American

war authentic?"

made, therefore best. All grocers. Adv. Few of the men who are willing to give you a recommendation would give you a job



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